DIRECTORS' AND PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF A PROGRAM PROMOTING THE ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF WOMEN WITH REFUGEE STATUS

by

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STATEMENT OF THESIS APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

The present study examined perceptions of those involved in a local program designed to increase economic self-sufficiency among women with refugee status. The study was a qualitative investigation of both directors' and participants' perceptions of the program, its goals, and the challenges and successes of the program. The goals of the study were to give the participants a voice about how they experienced the program, and provide insight that may be useful to the program directors and other similar programs. Over 14 months, we collected documents created by the program directors and conducted interviews with program directors and participants in the program. Major findings of the data validated the importance of program, with the participants expressing appreciation for the social and economic benefits of the program. However, the program faced several financial, infrastructure and communication challenges. Directors expressed concern that the program was not as effective in serving the refugee community as anticipated and that participants were not taking ownership of the program. After analyzing the data, I explored possible reasons that might explain for the programs' challenges and identified assumptions of the program directors and government that negatively affected the effectiveness of the program. I conclude by recommending that service directors do a better job of understanding, consulting and including the participants of their program in the decision-making processes. I also recommend that service providers start small in their programs, as well as advocate for more governmental resources and support.

To the brave women before me, who sacrificed an immense amount for the freedom and equality I enjoy today. And to those who have inspired me to join in the fight for a better, more just world—Roselia, Marissa, Kim, Muna & Kamala. Finally, to my centerpieces: my dear mother, best friend Rach, and fantastic husband Chad.

You fill my life with joy, which is my reason to live.

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INTRODUCTION

Resettlement for Women with Refugee Status

Globally, over 46 million people have fled or been violently forced from their homes (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2010). Some 10 million survivors have been granted refugee status by the United Nations, and wait indefinitely in refugee camps to return to their communities someday or be resettled in a safer area. According to the United Nations, a person with refugee status is an individual "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country" (UNHCR, 1995).

Of the 10 million people with refugee status, the United States annually resettles approximately 70,000 people in communities throughout the country (Office of Refugee Resettlement [ORR], 2007), with over a thousand resettling in the Salt Lake Valley each year (Utah Department of Workforce Services, 2009). Since the early 1980s, an estimated 25,000 people with refugee status have resettled into the area from countries such as Iraq, Burma, Bhutan, Somalia, Burundi, and Sudan (Utah Department of Workforce Services, 2009). Locally, the International Rescue Committee and Catholic Community Services assist the initial settling of people with refugee status. Then, after an initial resettlement period of up to 2 years, other agencies like the Asian Association

of Utah and Lutheran Services offer limited support to newcomers. Of great concern to these agencies, the Salt Lake community, and other host communities, is how to best assist newcomers in their resettlement, as these people attempt to rebuild their lives and become integrated members of society.

In Salt Lake and elsewhere, the process of resettlement can be immensely challenging for newcomers, since most arrive to their new communities with few material possessions, transferable resources or income (Geo-jaja & Magnum, 2007; Segal & Mayadas, 2005). They often struggle to overcome emotional trauma, navigate their new urban environment, learn a new language and culture, and become financially self-sufficient and integrated members in the community (Beiser, 2009; Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003; Gray & Elliot, 2001).

For women in particular, the resettlement process can be especially challenging. Many women faced restricted access to resources, formal education, and job training, and were only allowed minimal participation in decision and policy making in their original communities (Gray & Elliot, 2001; Martin & Copeland, 1988; Women's Refugee Commission, 2010). Many women also were victims of sexual assault, torture, and severe gender discrimination (Deacon & Sullivan, 2009; Salbi, 2006). These experiences traumatize women and exacerbate challenges within the resettlement process (Deacon & Sullivan, 2009; Gozdziak & Long, 2005). In addition, there are aspects of the resettlement process itself that further magnify the challenges faced by women with refugee status. For example, women may not have many appropriate and accessible resources available to them (Deacon & Sullivan, 2009, Lamb, 1996; Phillimore, Craig, Goodson & Sankey, 2006; Women's Refugee Commission, 2010). Due to language and

cultural barriers, as well as childcare and transportation issues, women may be particularly isolated from learning about or taking advantage of available opportunities that enable them to support themselves and their families (Deacon & Sullivan, 2009; Gray & Elliot, 2001; Gozdziak & Long, 2005; Martin & Copeland, 1988). These challenges are partially due to the fact that there are scarce resources available for refugee resettlement on a national level.

Specifically, the federal government oversees the resettlement program in the United States, and allocates local resettlement agencies a one-time sum of $1,800 for each individual when he or she first arrives (Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, 2010; Schwartz, 2010). This money is used for newcomers' initial rent, furniture and basic needs, as well as administrative costs of the agencies (Nawyn, 2010; Schwartz, 2010). However, some argue that these resettlement agencies are so underfunded, they struggle to meet the most basic needs of newcomers, and many of whom end up living in poverty (Barnes & Aguilar, 2007; Geo-jaja & Magnum, 2007, Schwartz, 2010; U.S. Committee on Foreign Relations, 2010). Some newcomers even face eviction after just months of living in the United States, or grapple between buying food or diapers for their children (Schwartz, 2010). Another aspect of the resettlement program that makes resettlement difficult for women with refugee status is the federal emphasis on newcomers achieving quick employment and economic independence (Halpern, 2008; Nawyn, 2010; Potocky, 1996). Performance indicators of successful resettlement efforts are largely based on employment rates, excluding other crucial components like standard of living, poverty rates, or how newcomers adjust to their new environment (Halpern, 2008; Potocky, 1996). This affects women with refugee status

given that resettlement agencies are limited in the types of services they can offer. Agencies must focus their efforts on locating educational and employment opportunities for the most employable individual per household. In most cases, this means that the men are recipients of resettlement support and efforts (Z. Xiao, personal communication, August 21, 2010; Lamb, 1996; Nawyn, 2010). It is thus a concern that resettlement agencies "put the men to work, the children in school and somehow the women are forgotten," according to Samira Harnish, founder of Women of the World (2011). Because women are typically deemed as less employable than their husbands, they tend to be excluded from employment and educational opportunities. That is, due to the shortage of resources for refugee resettlement, women with refugee status often have less access to resources than do men.

Finally, women with refugee status may have little voice in resettlement efforts and in their host communities. In general, little is understood about what strengths and needs these women have, their experiences with resettlement and resettlement programs, as well as their perspectives about how services might be improved (Deacon & Sullivan, 2009; Gray & Elliot, 2001; Presse & Thompson, 2008). This is a common concern for many refugee-focused programs, as expressed by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees: "The most commonly used measures of a program's success are economic, *with relatively few taking into account the refugees' own perspective*" (Presse & Thompson, 2008). Few programs include or consider participants' feedback in overall program evaluation, or allow participants to be involved in the planning of the program (Gray & Elliot, 2001). Because women have traditionally been excluded from resettlement efforts, they have even less opportunity to voice their opinions, offer their

perceptions, and in these ways, allow their new community to understand them better (Lindgren & Lipson, 2004).

With little understood about women with refugee status, their strengths and assets tend to get overlooked. This might be due to the deficit-based approach that is often used by service providers when working within communities (Craig, 2007), which focuses on and addresses the needs of a population, but not its strengths or abilities to overcome challenges (Morgan & Ziglio, 2007). Many women with refugee status arrive to the United States with multiple strengths and skills. For example, many women survived bleak circumstances with few resources in their country of origin. They developed skills such as resourcefulness, persistence, ingenuity and hand-making skills (Brown, 2010; Moussa, 1998). Some service providers argue that when given the proper support, women with refugee status can capitalize on these assets (Brown, 2010; Moussa, 1998). Furthermore, when women with refugee status have access to programs that allow them to capitalize on their assets and contribute to their communities, research suggests that their mental health improves as they gain a sense of control and self-respect that might have been destroyed over time (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003; Martin & Copeland, 1988).

Although there are limited data about the effects of investing in women with refugee status, there is a growing body of research on the role that investing in women plays around the globe. Research demonstrates that investing in the self-sufficiency of women results in long-lasting positive changes for the women, their families and entire communities (Martin & Copeland, 1988; Raheim & Bolden, 1995; United States Agency for International Development, 2005; Women's Refugee Commission, 2010). This is

especially apparent in areas where women have access to programs that promote their self-sufficiency, such as microfinance, entrepreneurial training programs, and other income-generating activities (Raheim & Bolden; 1995; Strier & Abdeen, 2009). On a global scale, family health improves when women participate in income-generating activities, as women tend to invest in household improvements, health and education which has positive affects for entire communities (Blumberg, 2000; Colic-Peisker & Walker 2003; Kristof & WuDunn, 2009; Martin & Copeland, 1988; Roudi-Famimi & Moghadam, 2003). Because research has demonstrated that programs designed to promote the self-sufficiency of women have resulted in positive community development, host-communities of newcomers might adopt the approach of investing in programs specifically for women with refugee status as a way to promote the well-being of the women and the entire community.

In light of these challenges and potential benefits of assisting women with refugee status, it is especially important for service providers to have resources available about women with refugee status, and how to best serve this population. Unfortunately, little academic material exists to help service providers make informed decisions on how to maximize resources and optimize effectiveness in assisting women with refugee status become self-sufficient (Lindgren & Lipson, 2004). As such, the present study examines a local program designed to promote economic self-suficiency through entrepreneurial training and craft activities.

Purpose of Study

In order to fill the gap of knowledge in regards to local resettlement efforts for women with refugee status, the present study examines perceptions of a local program designed to increase economic self-sufficiency among women with refugee status. The study is a qualitative investigation of both directors' and participants' perceptions of the program, its goals, and the challenges and successes of the program. Over the duration of 14 months, I collected documents created by the program directors and conducted interviews with the programs' directors and participants. By collecting, analyzing and sharing this information, I aimed to 1.) give the participants of the program the opportunity to share their perceptions, 2.) provide feedback to the program directors that might be constructive for the program, and 3.) provide information that might be insightful for service providers working with women with refugee stuats, so improvements may be made to similar programs.

To accomplish these goals, it was essential to gain an authentic understanding of the women's experiences in the program. It was similarly important to understand the inner-workings of a program serving women with refugee status, and the challenges service providers face on a day-to-day basis. To gain this understanding, I took a Community-Based Research (CBR) approach, which is a type of research that is done "*with* rather than *on* the community" (Strand, 2000, p.85). In conventional social science research, researchers maintain a hierarchical separation between themselves and those being researched (Community Research Collaborative, 2007), regarding the "community as their laboratory and community members as convenient samples" (Strand, 2000 pg. 85). Conventional researchers control how the study is designed, which methods are

used and how the results are disseminated (Strand, 2000). Although this more positivistic approach may have merit for some research studies, it may not be appropriate or effective in working with and understanding community members. For this reason, the CBR approach was the model selected for this study as it emphasizes the importance of mutual respect and developing trust with community members, having open exchanges of information, and sharing power with participants in the design of the study (Community Research Collaborative, 2007).

The program under study—Pathways to Self-Sufficiency (Pathways)—was created in August 2009 to empower women with refugee status to become economically self-sufficient through part-time entrepreneurial activities. This program, like others in the country, emphasized entrepreneurship as a way to promote the well-being of newcomers. The directors of the Pathways program recognized that people with refugee status arrived with previous skills and entrepreneurial experience. As such, Pathways offered participants the necessary materials, weekly entrepreneurial training courses, and a workshop area for participants to learn or develop one of a few handcraft skills—mainly sewing, knitting or bead-making. The original goal of the program was to empower participants to create and sell their hand-made products for a small income while acquiring entrepreneurial skills in the process.

Role of the Researcher

Qualitative research is by nature interpretive, and thus the development of the research question, data collection and analysis, and final conclusions are greatly influenced by the researcher (Creswell, 2003; Maxwell, 2005). Thus, it is especially important for me to be explicit about my personal values, biases, and motivations for

conducting this study. This information may help readers better assess my procedures and analysis.

I first started working with Salt Lake's refugee population in 2009 upon returning from Guatemala, where I lived for 2 years. My work in Central America exposed me to economic and social systems that contributed to the damage of livelihoods, disintegration of communities and migration of people from their homes to search for a better life. Upon my return to Utah, I became cognizant of the many newcomers to the area, and learned about the systems that they were escaping. Of the newcomers, I was especially concerned for the thousands of people with refugee status who, despite their resettlement to a safer country, were struggling immensely. Although I long to help improve the systems that expel millions of people from their homes in the first place, my focus remained local. I seek to improve local systems and programs in a way that promotes the long-term well being of my community, and especially people with refugee backgrounds.

In my experience, the creation and implementation of policies and programs designed for people with refugee status usually excludes the refugees themselves, particularly the women. Although those individuals responsible for programs may have good intentions, they can sometimes be disconnected from the day-to-day needs of the people and even maintain a top-down mentality that they are bringing aid to helpless people (Gray & Elliot, 2001; Martin & Copeland, 1988; Wallace, 1993). This mentality, as well as the exclusion of the participants in the process of developing and overseeing policies, contributes to the ineffectiveness of systems and delivery of services, and the perpetuation of a cycle of disempowerment and dependency (Wallace, 1993). Furthermore, I believe all people are capable and eager to contribute to their own well

being if provided the opportunity (Gray & Elliot, 2001). As such, people with refugee status should be included in the decision-making about their resettlement, and regarded as creative, resourceful and hard-working community members.

Another one of my roles as a researcher was to consider and minimize risk to the participants of the study. This consideration is especially important when working with people with refugee status (Ellis, Kia-Keating, Lincoln, Nur & Yusuf, 2007; Miller, 2004), as these people are at risk of being subject to intrusion and emotional stress. A researcher must consider the backgrounds of individuals, issues of confidentiality, communication and interpretation, as well as problems associated with past discrimination and political repression (Ellis et al., 2007; Maiter, Simich, Jacobsen & Wise, 2008). A researcher must then protect against risks by developing a trustworthy relationship with participants and adopting a philosophy of reciprocity and equity in social exchanges (Maiter et al., 2008). As such, the following safeguards were incorporated into the study to ensure that the participants were protected:

1. For 7 months, I attended weekly workshops, meetings and social events with the participants of the study in order to establish positive relationships and build trust. The quality of the relationships remained an important consideration throughout the duration of the study.
2. The topics for this study did not require participants to discuss or relive traumatic histories.
3. Before the interview process, I spent many hours with Kamala Bhattarai, a leader within the refugee participant group and my research assistant, developing a positive relationship with her in her home, explaining the research objectives, the

research questions, and how I was going to use the information. Kamala was interviewed with the same interview questions as the other participants, which helped ensure that Kamala understood the process. This was important since Kamala regularly communicated with the non-English speaking participants and could help them also understand the objectives and procedures of the study.

4. Oral permission to conduct and record interviews was received from all non-English speaking participants.
5. The University of Utah's Institutional Review Board conducted a research ethics review, and approval was provided.
6. There were formal exchanges of information:
    a. Group meeting to discuss, clarify and edit findings, as requested by participants. Kamala translated the discussions into the language of the non-English speaking participants.
    b. Verbatim transcriptions are available to participants, and can be translated in person, if participants wish to review them.
7. Pseudonyms are used in place of the participants' names in the descriptive narrative examples provided throughout the paper.

METHODS

Participants

The participants of this study came from two groups: 1.) the directors and staff that oversee the Pathways program and 2.) the artisan participants of the Pathways program.

Pathways' Directors and Staff

All major directors and staff of the Pathways program were approached to participate in the study, and all (n = 6) agreed to participate. The final sample included the director of the Pathways program, two staff people, and three major stakeholders. Of the two staff, one person was a part-time employee who taught the artisan participants various crafting skills, and the other was a part-time Bhutanese artisan who was hired temporarily to assist the director with communication and program organization. Two of the major stakeholders were the cofounders of the Utah Refugee Coalition, which is the nonprofit organization that oversaw the Pathways project. The third stakeholder supervised the planning and implementing of the Pathways program as Division Director for Community Resources Development for Salt Lake County. Although not all of the individuals in this group are directors of the Pathways program, for the sake of simplicity, this group will be known as the "directors' " group.

Artisan Participants

In order to distinguish the participants of the Pathways program from the participants of the study, the participants of the Pathways program members are referred to as the "artisans' " group, since members of this group created hand-crafted products in the program. Within the artisans' group, 10 female Bhutanese participants were recruited from the Pathways program because Bhutanese women comprised almost all of the remaining participants in the Pathways program as of September 2010.

The artisans who participated in this study were part of the Lhotshampa ethnic group. In the early 1990s, the Hindu Lhotshampa people were perceived as a threat to the Buddhist Bhutanese government, as they were growing to represent almost a quarter of the Bhutan's population (Hutt, 2005). To achieve a more homogeneous nation, the Bhutanese government enforced national dress codes and disallowed the Lhotshampa people to speak their native language of Nepali in schools or government institutions. When the Lhotshampa demonstrated opposition, the Bhutanese government became violent, using tactics such as torture and murder aimed to expel them from the country (Hutt, 2005). Many Lhotshampa women were severely beaten or raped in front of their families (Giri, 2005). Eventually, more than 100,000 Lhotshampa people fled or were violently forced from Bhutan, most moving to Nepalese refugee camps. Since neither Bhutan nor Nepal would claim the Lhotshampa refugees, they remained in the impoverished camps for nearly two decades. After no progress was made between Bhutan and Nepal in terms of negotiating what to do with the Lhotshampa people, the United States extended the invitation to 60,000 of the Lhotshampa refugees to live in cities throughout the nation (Shrestha, 2008). Since 2008, over 500 individuals with

refugee status from Bhutan have been resettled to the Salt Lake valley (Utah Refugee Services Office, 2009).

Recruitment

Kamala Bhattarai-- a Bhutanese artisan of the Pathways program and research assistant for this study-- approached Pathways' artisans about participating in the study. Originally, we aimed to include participants that were active, somewhat or minimally active, or no longer active in the program. However, it proved to be difficult to locate participants who were not highly active in the program. Without being able to recruit artisans in person at the Pathways' weekly workshops, Kamala was limited to contacting artisans via phone. However, of the 55 female Bhutanese artisans from our original list of potential respondents, only 20 artisans listed a phone number, and 5 of these numbers had been disconnected. Of the 15 women with working phone numbers, 10 agreed to be participants of the study. The other 5 women were either unable to participate in the study due to work, or had moved to a location that was no longer convenient for them to participate in either Pathways or the study.

Of the ten artisan participants, the average age was 42.2 years, SD = 9.8 (ranging from 24 to 53 years) (see Table 1). The women had an average of 3 children (Ranging from 1 to 7). Three of the 10 women spoke English. Of the 10 women, 6 received no formal education, 2 received less than 2 years of formal education, and the remaining 2 graduated from high school. At the time of their participation, the average length of time the women had been in United States was 17 months (ranging from 10-30 months). All of the artisan respondents spent 17 or 18 years in the Nepalese refugee camps, and

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Artisan Participants		
Characteristic		Respondents
Age	24-34	2
	35-45	4
	46-53	4
Number of children	1-2 children	5
	3-4 children	3
	5-7 children	2
English language	No English	7
	Little English	1
	Fluent English	2
Education	No formal	6
	2 years or less	2
	High school	2
Months in U.S.	10 months	2
	12 months	1
	15 months	2
	18 months	1
	19 months	1
	20 months	1
	21 months	1
	30 months	1
Months participated in program (at time of interview)	5 months	1
	7 months	1
	8 months	1
	9 months	2
	11 months	1
	13 months	4

reported having participated in the Pathways program between 5-13 months. A summary of these demographic characteristics can be seen in Table 1.

Procedure

This study was a qualitative examination of the perceptions of the directors and artisans in the Pathways program. The goal of this qualitative method was to provide a valid interpretation of the perceptions of participants combined with rich description and theoretical explanation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Additionally, this qualitative approach

can shed light on the program's processes and outcomes by telling the stories of the participants (Patton, 2001). This information may be especially important for the administrators of the Pathways program and other similar programs.

For this study, I collected two types of data: 1.) written documents used by the administrators of the Pathways program, and 2.) in-depth, open-ended interviews with both the directors' and artisans' groups. Throughout the data collection process, I collected written material created by the Pathways directors, including minutes from board meetings, official publications and reports. These documents highlighted the evolution of the program's official goals, structure, and approach. Also, I conducted open-ended interviews with the directors' and artisans' groups (see Appendices A and B). The purpose of conducting interviews was to gather a "full and revealing picture" of what was going on in the program (Maxwell, 2005, p. 110). Interviews lasted about an hour and addressed three broad topics:

1.) General perceptions of success and goals of resettlement.

2.) Perceptions and expectations about and for the Pathways program.

3.) Benefits and challenges of success in the Pathways program.

Before starting the interview process, it was essential that I establish positive relations and develop trust with potential participants (Johnson, Ali & Shipp; 2009; Maxwell, 2005). This is especially true for communities that are generally closed to outsiders and have developed a "self-protective insularity" (Miller, 2004). In the case of refugee communities, the process of developing trust requires an investment of time and energy and can be a complex, slow process (Miller, 2004). However, without that trust, participants may offer their "front stage" responses, giving brief, politically correct, or

most desired responses. To avoid this type of response, I began the research process by building relationships and trust with participants, as well as the directors of the program. In September 2009, I started volunteering with the Pathways program, before I had any intentions of studying the program as a thesis project. I attended weekly classes offered to the artisans, met with the director of the program on a regular basis, and attended Pathways board meetings. Eventually, I decided to do my thesis work on the Pathways program, and had already established positive relationships with the program administrators and some of the artisans. I continued to work hundreds of hours alongside the directors and artisans, assisting with various duties as needed. During this process, I became heavily involved in the administrative side of the program, helping draft documents and presentations, recording and e-mailing minutes from regular meetings, recruiting and overseeing volunteers within the program, and organizing various promotional activities for Pathways. Eventually, I felt that I had established positive relationships with many of the directors and artisans of the Pathways program. These positive relationships allowed for a greater degree of trust through the research process. Additionally, this intensive, long-term involvement in the program provided additional validity to the study, as I was able to collect more rich and complete data, and rule out alternative or premature explanations for my observations of the program and participants (Maxwell, 2005).

Another way that trust was established between the artisans and myself was through my relationship with one of the leaders of the artisan group, Kamala Bhattarai. Kamala is a Bhutanese woman with refugee status who heavily participated in the Pathways program. Because of her leadership role, Kamala and I worked together on

different aspects of the program and developed a close friendship. In May of 2010, we hired Kamala Bhattarai as our research assistant due to her leadership role, demonstrated ability to communicate and desire to help her community. It was essential to have the assistance of Kamala to help with communication, translation, cultural considerations, recruitment, coordination of the artisan interviews, and especially to help maintain some degree of trust throughout the research process.

Before Kamala and I started the interview process with the artisan participants, we felt it would be important for all respondents to understand and perceive me as a researcher, and not an employee or administrator of the Pathways program. This was to prevent the artisan respondents from feeling that their responses to interview questions could jeopardize their inclusion or treatment within the program. For this reason, in August of 2010, I minimized my participation with the administrative side of the program and stopped attending Pathways functions. I did continue to meet with the artisans, but in different capacities, such as visiting their apartment complexes. During this transition, my priority was to ensure that Kamala, who communicated regularly with the other artisans, understood my affiliation with the Pathways program as a student researcher from the University of Utah. Additionally, before the interviews, Kamala emphasized my role to the artisan respondents.

During the trust-building process, we started to develop an interview protocol which included an opening statement listing the objectives for the study, key questions, probes and space to record observations and demographic information of the respondent (see Appendix B). As common in qualitative studies, the interview questions were based on broad themes, although over the duration of the study, specific questions emerged and

were refined as we gained knowledge about what to ask, how to ask it, and so forth (Creswell, 1998; Maxwell, 2005). We conducted interviews with the director group first, during the month of August 2010. Before the interviews were conducted, written consent was obtained. For this group, interviews were held in a location comfortable for interviewees. Interviews were conducted in English. For the artisan group, interviews were conducted between September and November 2010. Interviews were held in the home of Kamala Bhattarai, which was in proximity to many of the artisans' homes, and offered interviewees a comfortable and familiar setting. Before the interview, Kamala, the interviewee and I spent time socializing in order to build rapport and help the interviewee become more comfortable. Because most artisan interviewees did not speak English and were not literate in their native language, short oral form consent was requested and obtained, as translated by Kamala. Interviews were also conducted in the artisans' native language of Nepali with the assistance of Kamala, and then translated back into English. All interviews were audio taped, and reflective notes were recorded on paper during and immediately following the interviews. The English portions of the interviews were transcribed verbatim from the audio files onto a computer. Recording the transcripts verbatim was important to the validity of the study, as it ensured that I didn't record only what I felt was significant to the study (Maxwell, 2005).

To help the artisans feel safe in disclosing experiences that might reflect poorly on the Pathways program, Kamala and I explained to the artisan respondents before the interview that their answers would not affect their inclusion or treatment in the program and their names would not be disclosed to the public. Also, Kamala reassured the artisans through the interviewing process that they could disclose personal feelings—both

positive and negative. For example, one artisan respondent felt nervous to share something that might be perceived as negative about the Pathways program. But Kamala reassured her by explaining, "She doesn't want to say, but I tell her that it is okay," and this may have helped the respondent feel safe in disclosing her feelings. This was another reason the community-based research approach, which emphasizes trust, was critical for this study-- participants needed to feel safe in sharing their experiences.

Upon the completion of interviews with the directors group, we compiled a list of preliminary interpretations. The list was e-mailed to the interviewees for review and feedback. Afterward, the preliminary interpretations were presented at a Pathways strategy meeting on September 3rd, 2010. The interpretations were discussed with the respondents, and no changes were suggested at that time.

Due to the language and communication barrier with the artisans, we sought additional verification of the accuracy of the artisans' responses, as translated by Kamala. After completing six interviews with the artisans, I arranged to meet in the home of one of the English-speaking interviewees, Jaine, after she was finished with the interview process herself. Jaine was paid 10 dollars to assist me in listening to and translating the Nepali sections of an interview. Together, we would listen to Nepali sections of one of the recorded interviews. I would frequently stop the recorded tape to ask for her translation. As she translated, I would type the results into a Word document. After the process was completed, I compared Kamala's translation with Jaine's translation and found that the translations were similar in content. This gave credence that there was reliability in the translation process.

Data Analysis

The process of analyzing the data was a long, nonlinear and collaborative process. Once the interviews were transcribed, I started breaking down and organizing the vast amount of data into different files and folders, which made the data more accessible and manageable (Seidman, 2006). Also, in this initial analysis stage, I read though the transcriptions to understand the general gist of what the respondents conveyed in their interviews. During this process, it was necessary to reduce the data. To do so, I would review the study's goals, and mark the passages that seemed particularly relevant to the study (Seidman, 2006). These passages were then cut and pasted into new documents to be reviewed again. Eventually, as the data were read through, organized, and reduced, I started to be able to identify themes in respondents' goals, successes, challenges, and barriers to success in regards to the Pathways program. Passages were then organized in terms of their overall theme, as I cut and pasted passages and bunched them with similar passages. Once the themes were identified, and all the most relevant passages were organized into a respective theme, I created visualizations of the themes so I could see how they pieced together in portraying the directors and artisans perceptions of the program. Then, I was able to start comparing and contrasting patterns within the directors' and artisans' groups, and determining where there were overlapping themes. Finally, in order to ensure that the findings could be presented in a concise manner, I further reduced the passages to include only those exerts that best supported each theme. These exerts are included in the results section.

Through the data analysis process, I worked in collaboration with my research team and the participants of the program. For example, each week, I would meet my

committee chair, Marissa Diener. She examined the transcriptions and would check my interpretations and coding, especially searching for disconfirming evidence of my interpretations (Maxwell, 2005). I would also have frequent discussions with the others on my committee, as well as Kamala, so they could also check my interpretations, offer feedback, and make recommendation. Additionally, a woman with refugee status who directed a similar organization working with women with refugee status read through some of the final study to identify potential discrepancies or flaws in my assumptions of the study. This collaboration, or triangulation, provided additional validity to the study, as it prevented the risk that the findings were not based on my personal biases (Maxwell, 2005).

Once the interviews were coded and main themes were identified and supported by relevant quotes and examples, both the directors' group and the artisans' group received the findings of the interviews of their respective group. The purpose of sharing the results of the interviews with the respondents was to check our interpretations of the themes identified and to allow the respondents to give additional feedback about their experiences and the study. Receiving this respondent validation was essential in ruling out the risk that I misinterpreted the respondents (Maxwell, 2005). Due to logistical reasons, we were not able to physically meet with the directors' group, and the findings were e-mailed to each respondent. Their feedback was collected via e-mail. In the meeting with the artisans, we met in the home of Kamala, and had a discussion about the themes. Kamala would explain each theme to the artisans in Nepali, and allow for them to discuss the given theme, which they would discuss for about 5 minutes each. Then, the artisans would offer their feedback to me, which Kamala translated back into English.

We discussed each of the themes in length as to ensure that I had a clear understanding of their perceptions. The feedback from both groups is included in the results section.

RESULTS

Pathways to Self-Sufficiency

In September of 2009, Pathways' objectives were to enable individuals with refugee status to generate supplemental income through part-time entrepreneurial activities, and to prepare and foster part-time small business development. The program was designed for participants to progress through three stages. The first stage was designed for individuals with no prior self-employment skills, little or no English skills, and no trade skills. Participants in this stage attended classes in order to learn trade skills, such as sewing, knitting or jewelry-making. Participants were given supplies in order to make a particular product, such as necklaces from paper beads or hand-knit baby hats and booties. Participants were paid upon the completion of their product, thus providing participants immediate income for their work. Meanwhile, products would be marketed and sold to the public under the program. During this first stage, participants were asked to attend a 12-week entrepreneurship class in order to learn about business ownership skills such as marketing, finance, and business structure.

After completing the first stage, it was assumed that participants would progress to the second stage where they would master basic business concepts in which to run their own part-time business. In this stage, participants would be assigned a mentor from the local business sector, and the mentor would assist participants in the drafting of a business plan. At this point, participants would be proficient in a trade, and be

responsible for purchasing supplies and all items related to their business. They would keep all the profits from their sales.

In the final stage, participants would identify and develop partnerships with existing resources to support the growth of their part-time businesses. With the continuous assistance of mentors and supplemental entrepreneurial training courses, participants would determine marketing strategies, branding, packaging, production, and the long-term projections for their business. During this final stage, participants would qualify to take out a $500 micro-loan from one of the participating partners. At the end of this three-stage process, participants would be "able to go out and open their own businesses and run their own businesses" (David).

In terms of progress over the first year, between December 2009 and December of 2010, a total of $39,000 was distributed to over 75 artisans for the hand-made crafts, through the financial support of community donors. However, in September 2010, the program was approximately $12,000 in the red, with over $15,000 in unsold inventory. The cash flow problem was the result of products not being sold at the same pace that the artisans made the products. Thus, the decision was made to stop paying the artisans until their products sold. Some artisans were told to stop making products altogether. Also, the program stopped accepting new artisans into the program. In general, dealing with the considerable financial issues became a difficult, time-consuming, and even divisive challenge for directors. Because many of the artisans were not earning minimum wage for their products, the program directors had to grapple with potential legal issues and perceptions that "Pathways might be a sweatshop," as one director posed. This controversy raised the question of whether the Pathways program should continue

emphasizing the income-generation components of the program, or focus on just the social, educational and skill development components. Also, the issue of measuring success became an important discussion among the program directors.

In regards to the programs' stages and entrepreneurial emphasis, only between 5 and 10% of all the artisans progressed into the second stage of the program, due to the fact that some of the artisans were not aware of, or didn't want to progress to the second stage. For this reason, the program directors modified the design of the program in August 2010 to include a cooperative for those artisans who completed stage one of the program, but were not ready or willing to progress in order to start their own business. Artisans in the co-op would be responsible for buying their own materials, and to sell their products on a consignment basis. However, artisans would still able to sell their products using the Pathways logo on its website, as well as having a venue to gather on a weekly basis. Also, for reasons that will be discussed, the entrepreneurial training courses stopped being taught to artisans.

Finally, another important change within the Pathways program dealt with the diversity within the participant groups. Although the program started with both younger and older men and women with refugee status from several countries such as Eritrea, Bhutan, and Burma, after a year, almost all of the participants were middle-aged Bhutanese women with refugee status. This demographic change, as well as the other changes listed, will be discussed with more detail in the following sections. A summary of changes within the Pathways program can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Changes within the Pathways Program		
	September 2009	September 2010
Program Objectives	Achieve self-sufficiency through entrepreneurial activities	Unclear
Payout to Artisans	Artisans were paid for their projects before the products sold on the market	Due to financial issues, artisans had to have their products sold before being paid
Program Design	3-Stage program (learn a skill, get a mentor, get a loan to start a business)	Artisans weren't progressing past Stage 1, so a new co-op was created
Target Population	Diverse ethnic & age groups of men & women	Only middle-aged Bhutanese women active within the program

Results According to the Directors of the Pathways Program

According to the respondents within the directors' group, the Pathways program experienced various successes and challenges since the inception in August of 2009. After transcribing and coding the interview transcriptions, the respondents were e-mailed the results of interviews in order to give feedback. The main themes from the respondent's interviews, as well as their feedback, are below. Additionally, a summary of the themes can be seen in Table 3.

Successes of the Pathways Program according to the Directors' Group

As reported by respondents within the directors' group, the Pathways program has enjoyed various successes. First, the participants have benefited from the program both socially and economically. Also, there has been an outpouring of support from the community, which has raised community awareness about people with refugee status.

Table 3: Summary of Interview Results		
	Directors' Group	Artisans' Group
Successes/Positive Components	1.) Socially & economically benefits participants 2.) Strong interest from community	1.) Opportunity for non-English speakers 2.) Opportunity to earn an income & gain work experience 3.) Opportunity to improve mental health & well-being 4.) Opportunity to acquire new skills & information 5.) Opportunity to socialize & develop friendship
Challenges/Difficult Components	1.) Limited resources 2.) Struggle to determine cohesive goals 3.) Need for program protocols, systems of measurement and a business plan 4.) Challenges with communication & collaboration 5.) Not been as effective in serving the refugee population as anticipated 6.) Perceived lack of willingness & ownership by the participants	1.) Not getting paid as expected 2.) Receiving less support from directors 3.) Feeling limited in how they could participate in the program 4.) Having anxiety that the program will end

The Pathways Program Benefits the Participants

According to the directors of the Pathways program, one of the key successes of the Pathways program was how it benefited the artisan participants in economic and social ways. Economically, they believed that Pathways provided "opportunity for those that might not have the opportunity to find a job immediately—an opportunity to earn a supplemental income" (Jessie). The Pathways program provided artisans with the resources "so they can create something that they know how to create…and help them put it into the market so that they can earn some income from that" (Jessie).

Additionally, they thought that the program helped artisans develop "a skill where they can obtain employment or develop a business where they are able to earn income. That is the success of the program" (Robert). In this way, Pathways helped participants develop skills that allowed them the ability to immediately earn an income within the program.

On a social level, the directors believed that Pathways program "empowers people to be able to help themselves" (Jessie) and gives "self-esteem to the participants" through the development of life-skills (Sarah). The directors perceived that Pathways helped artisans gain confidence:

> Because of their experiences that they have faced in refugee camps and in their countries too, many of them just lost their confidence to do what they need to do…part of (Pathways) is giving the confidence back if it would give them the material and the sewing machine and they are artists they can make a purse. That purse is more than just a purse that they can sell. It is just giving the confidence that is like 'hey I can do something on my own'…we have seen quite a bit of improvements with the individuals (Jessie).

The directors believed that the reason that Pathways was benefitting the artisans in these ways was because the artisans were "learning the basic life skills" (Robert). Also, "the individual refugees get out into the community, learning how to get around in the community, socializing with other refugees…it improves their social networking within their communities and the greater community of American society" (Robert). Also, "It broadens (the participants') perspectives on what they can do" (Heather). Because of these social benefits, the participants of Pathways are able to "become more fully functional in our society, and it is a good thing" (David).

Strong Interest from the Community

In addition to benefiting the participants, the program directors believed another success of Pathways was the receptiveness of the community to the program, and the

attention that the program brought to the issue of refugee resettlement in the local community. "A lot of people perceive it as being a great idea…it is the whole teach people to fish, not give them fish type of thing. We are helping these people not be reliant on public aid" (David). For this reason, "people have come together just to support the program…it is remarkable" (Robert). Gaining community support was critical to the program, as one director remarked:

> There is no way the project itself could do it without the support of the community-- whether that is financial resources or just volunteer resources, or tools and equipments-- whatever that is going to be, it has to be supported by the community. It has to be a community effort (Jessie).

Also, due to the publicity around the Pathways program, the directors perceived that the larger community was becoming more aware of Salt Lake's refugee population and that "they are here to make a living, like everyone else; establish their roots here, raise a family. There are some that are going to need some support and assistance…I think the success of the program is the media attention it has gotten. It just helps with awareness and acceptance." The directors believed that the community was receptive to the Pathways program, and was becoming more aware of the importance of supporting the refugee community.

In sum, the directors identified several main successes of the program: 1.) that the artisan participants benefitted financially, by earning supplemental income, 2.) that the artisan participants gained self-confidence, learned life skills, and strengthened social networks, and 3.) that the publicity associated with the program raised awareness and educated the community about the issues facing those with refugee status.

Challenges Within the Pathways Program

The program directors mentioned several challenges within the Pathways program. These challenges included having inadequate resources, having a lack of cohesive objectives, as well as procedural, measurement and tracking practices. Also, another challenge was that there were communication issues on multiple levels, and that the program seemed to not be as effective in serving the artisans as anticipated. Finally, the directors perceived that the artisans were not taking ownership of the program. Each of these challenges is discussed in more detail below.

Limited Resources

All the directors of the Pathways program made mention of the limited resources that were available to the program. The program was initiated with a $20,000 grant from American Express, and later on, was awarded two grants of similar amounts. These funds made it possible to pay some of the basic costs of materials, rent the workshop space, hire limited part-time help, and pay the artisans for their products. The director was able to keep expenses low by renting an inexpensive workspace, locating sources for donated materials, and recruiting volunteers to teach the business curriculum and help with the classes. Even so, the initial funds were not enough to employ the staff necessary to sustain the program's infrastructure, run the sales portion of the program, or allow directors to invest time in spending time with the artisans.

Without sufficient funds, the program administrators were not able to hire the support needed for the day-to-day functioning of the program. There was only one full-time employee of Pathways; however, she had other responsibilities in addition to directing the Pathways program. "I really need to be careful…my job is more than

Pathways" (Jessie). As such, one stakeholder reflected: "The biggest problem is manpower…finding someone who is kind of high-level and willing to take on this kind of a project and stick with it, and get paid little or nothing-- it is challenging" (David). Although there were volunteers who donated their time to the program, retention was low, and coordinating the volunteers was difficult, as "they need to be given direction of how they can best help" (Sarah). The program could not afford to employ those individuals who could have been most pivotal to the effectiveness of the program. For example, one interviewee from the director group—a Bhutanese woman who had volunteered many hours, and was even hired temporarily to assist with organizing and communicating with the artisans— had to stop working for Pathways: "I would really like to help. I would really like to go, but nobody can pay me" (Shradha). Without these key people, the infrastructure of Pathways seemed to be at risk. "What we really, really need is you know, that is the structure, enough manpower so that the program functions effectively. We could have a really good structure in place, but if we don't have the manpower to carry it through, it is going to be something that is hard" (Jessie). Without the resources for hiring long-term and high-level employees, the program directors struggled with maintaining a strong infrastructure.

Additionally, without adequate funding, Pathways experienced difficulties with the sales portion of the program, resulting in "financial distress" (Heather). For one, the program did not have the capital to invest in hiring someone specific to do the sales, as previously mentioned, thus hand-made crafts were not readily and consistently available to the public, through a storefront or online. "We have a lot of people ask us all the time, where can I get this, you know I just bought this necklace, where can I buy another one if

I want one? And we don't have a place. It is hit or miss every time. And I think that has been a huge stumbling block to keeping a consistent cash flow" (Heather). Furthermore, the program could not afford to purchase all the materials necessary for the artisan's products. Thus, the program relied heavily on donations for materials. However, "when we rely on donations, it makes it a little hard because we then don't have consistent stuff" (Heather). The lack of consistency made products difficult to sell. One of the Bhutanese-hired staff commented that, "we were not selling enough for the peoples. I don't know why… We didn't sell much; we sell little bit." The initial $20,000 grant allowed for Pathways program to pay artisans for their products before their products sold. However, when the grant money was depleted, and the products were not selling as anticipated, Pathways could not pay artisans for their products. Without this necessary generation of revenue through the sales of the hand-made crafts, program directors had to expend their limited resources on locating additional support from the community simply to pay the artisans what they owed them. "The inventory issues have been huge…without community resources, there is no way these refugees would be paid." (Sarah). Even with outside support, "(the participants) are probably making less than minimum wage and that has got to change…the sweaters which they probably put 10 hours into, they only get 28 dollars, because we can't sell them for enough" (Heather). Thus, without the necessary resources upfront, the Pathways program was unable to afford personnel to manage sales, or the materials to ensure that the merchandise was consistent, which according to the directors, contributed to financial problems with the Pathways program.

Finally, another consequence of having too few resources is that the directors felt unable to invest time in working with or understanding the artisans. "That will be really cool if we could have time to sit down with a group and really work with them. But there is really no way we could do that right now, with everything else that we have to do, there is no way that we could just sit down with them.…there is lots of things that we could have done if we had the manpower" (Jessie). As such, due to the lack of resources, the program directors struggled to spend time with the artisans, in addition to not being able to employ the staff necessary to sustain the program's infrastructure or run the sales portion of the program.

Struggle to Determine Cohesive Objectives

The perceived objectives of the Pathways program were quite broad and differed for each of the respondents. The program directors seemed to agree on the need to have a common goal: "In this program you need to know what your goal is that you are trying to teach…what are the objectives?" (David). The three general perceived objectives of Pathways were that it was an entrepreneurial training program preparing participants to open their own small business, an income-generating program, enabling participants with the opportunity to sell hand-made products to supplement their incomes, and finally, a social program teaching life skills, job skills and promoting the well-being of the participants.

Most of the program directors maintained that Pathways was an entrepreneurial-training program, preparing participants to open their own small business. "The program is basically designed as a one-, two-, three-level, through the system and that at the end, you come out an entrepreneur and able to hold your own business" (Sarah). Another

director said: "I would describe it as an entrepreneurial training program. And the goal of the program is consistent with the same goals to move refugees on a path towards self-sufficiency, either in developing full on entrepreneurial skills where they are able to go out and open their own businesses and run their own businesses, or to at least acquire skills that at least give them enhanced job skills so that they are able to find employment" (David). So although participants can learn or develop a new skill like knitting, "it is not about learning knitting necessarily or sewing, or anything. It is about what you want to do as a small business. We can help you make money in the meantime by doing these little things, sewing or knitting or beading, or whatever we come up with" (Heather).

The directors also viewed Pathways as being an opportunity for people with refugee status to earn an income. "Pathways really is an effort trying to capture that gap and provide opportunity for those that might not have the opportunity to find a job immediately, an opportunity to earn a supplemental income" (Jessie). It was thus perceived that the Pathways program helped participants of the program become more economically self-sufficient. Thus, "the success of the Pathways program means that those involved in the program are capable then to, at the end, move towards self-sufficiency or self-reliance. They have a skill where they can obtain employment or develop a business where they are able to earn income…increase their ability for income" (Robert). According to the directors, helping participants become more self-reliant by earning an income seemed like a critical component to the program.

Finally, most respondents made remarks in the interviews emphasized that Pathways' objective was to help people with refugee status learn life skills, including financial literacy and job skills: "I think we should be looking at all sorts of different

ways they (the participants) can learn basic life skills….It has come so apparent that they are not learning these basic life skills and that until we can teach them that, you know things are floundering" (Heather). Another respondent emphasized the importance of teaching life-skills, especially in regards to financial literacy. "It really is more just a basic financial literacy class. There is a lot of value to that though because it helps the refugee participants in their own lives. If you get them comfortable to using a bank account for example, if you help them understand what kind of contracts that there are, they don't just sign stuff, they ask questions, they understand what interest is. Because they are going to become active participants in the economy and they are particularly vulnerable to all kind of scams. So to the extent that we can educate them even about that, I would call that a success" (David). Also, the life skills that were taught within the program should "give (the participants) enhanced job skills so that they are able to find employment" (David).

The lack of clarity in regards to the main objective of Pathways seemed to be at the crux of many issues within the program. As one respondent put it: "We have the social mission of the program versus the business mission," (Robert) with the social mission aiming to achieve the life skills objective, and the business mission training future business owners, as well as the program providing an opportunity for participants to earn an income. Although respondents did not always agree on Pathways' main objective, the directors did make distinctions between the varying objectives, and the inherent challenges for each. As just a social program, without the other economic components, the directors questioned whether they would be able to finance the program independent of grants, which were already scarce in the current economy. "There is

some overhead, I don't know if you are going to be able to get it all from grants" (Robert). As such, "the Pathways organization itself is going to have to have a business model to generate some amount of resource through the product development and selling the product" (Robert). In this way, Pathways would sell the artisan's products at a price that would both allow for the artisans to be paid, as well as sustain the program. However, to be successful in this approach, program directors would need to conduct an analysis of the market and merchandise to determine "how marketable are those products and how quickly can you turn those around?...Who is your competition? Is the timing correct?" (Robert). But this approach presented some major legal issues, another stakeholder warned:

> The problem is, if you make that a part of Pathways, people are going to accuse Pathways of creating a workshop and having unpaid laborers. And we have got to divorce those two things…it should be clear that those people are not being exploited by us, buying goods from them at slave labor wages, and then using that money to continue funding Pathways (David).

For this reason, some directors advocated that Pathways should be a training program only. "People who go to Pathways should be going through, progressing through" (David). The ongoing debate about Pathways' objectives has been a difficult challenge for the program directors, and has affected different aspects of the program.

Need for Stronger Infrastructure

During the month of interviewing Pathways' directors, they were grappling with how to address various weaknesses within the infrastructure of Pathways. Specifically, directors were concerned with the absence of protocols, systems to measure progress, and a financial plan.

According to almost all of the directors, the Pathways program did not have a set outline on how Pathways worked: "I would hope on the other side is that we do get a clearer definition of how this program works, at least in an outline format of: what are the criteria, how are people moving through it-- at least be able to identify we need to work on this, and this, and this…we have got to get this overall structure in place first" (David). Although, as one director pointed out:

> It is a work in progress. It is not something that is set in stone. And I think that that's what sometimes scares people is that it is not something that is done or the whole plan written out. It is very fluid… there is no way that we could say ten people will be in this, and that's set' because they will show up anyway. We try to enforce it as much as possible, but you know, with the population that we work with, if we just put hard lines on what we are doing, that's, it is just not, it is doing a disadvantage to the community. It isn't helping them...we have to be flexible based on the population that we are working with (Jessie).

Thus, some individuals perceived the lack of structure as a challenge, whereas others perceived the lack of structure as necessary to meeting the participants' needs.

Additionally, all program directors expressed the need for a better system of measuring the outcomes of the program:

> How do you measure where these people are in the program? How do you measure when you have achieved success? What are your goals, what are your objectives and then how do you measure whether you have met those goals and objectives? And how do you know when somebody is done? …I don't know what the results, what the intended results were. I don't see any method for measuring whether we have achieved results (David).

Measuring the program's success was also perceived as critical for donors, and the prospect of receiving additional funding. "To expand (Pathways) and to keep it viable, you are going to have to be able to show some accountability back to the grant makers. Just to say, 'look, here is my raw data to show that this is an effective program,' and right now, I don't think we can do that" (David). However, similar to the national resettlement

program, indicators of success tended to emphasize economic gains, such as income or number of participants who graduated through the program. But, as one respondent pointed out, "we can't measure how happy (the artisans) are because they make that purse. But nonetheless, I think that is a very valuable component that we have to tell, but it is just not measurable to do. The element that is measurable is how much supplemental income they (the participants) have made" (Jessie). For this reason, as well as limited resources and unclear objectives, creating and implementing a system to measure the program's progress was a challenge for program directors.

Finally, most respondents within the directors' group expressed their anxiety in regards to Pathways' financial state, as there was no business plan and minimal financial recording. "Since the program works in some ways like a business, having a financial model is essential in order to determine how much is paid to artisans and how much is needed to run the program. In essence, a business plan" (David). Additionally, without a finance structure in place, there was minimal financial recording. "I am a little frustrated that we have this program that supposedly teaches people entrepreneurial skills and we are apparently so bad at it ourselves. We really need to get the financial part in line because *it is fundamental that we are able to balance a checkbook.* And right now, we are not able to do that" (David). Due to the financial state of Pathways, there were concerns with how the program would move forward. "How do we get the systems into play quick enough and in a workable format that are all legal, that work with the IRS, that everything is tracked, that we know where the gaps are financially, that we know where we need to go and raise money? If we know where gaps are, then we can go to market and say we need to find a grant for this. But if aren't tracking numbers well enough and

we don't know where gaps are, then we just keep going, and all the sudden you've got a canyon of gap in finances and the program dies" (Sarah). The lack of a strong financial structure was a point of major concern for those within the directors' group

Challenges with Communication and Coordination

Another challenge faced by the Pathways directors, according to a few respondents within the directors group, was communication, both between the directors, and between the directors and artisans in the program. Within the directors group, one of the workshop teachers reflected, "I think we need more coordination on what is happening. I think I am going to insist on being pulled more into the loop than I have been. Everybody is doing one little thing, and that is not coordinated enough" (Heather). Additionally, two of the respondents from the directors' group mentioned specific difficulties communicating with the artisans within the program. For example, overcoming the language barrier was more difficult than anticipated, as a workshop teacher observed. "Language has been a huge barrier. And I know it goes a lot slower than they ever anticipated, so that six weeks went to twelve-week classes. Well, I mean just the things that they thought they could teach in six weeks, it took them twice as long" (Heather). Also, the director of Pathways recognized that there were communication issues between the administrators and participants of the program, and brainstormed ways to overcome the barrier. "By working with the leaders, I think that will really help. Again, the leaders could help us facilitate some of the communication challenges" (Jessie). One of the workshop teachers acknowledged that the participants were not always told or aware of the overall program goals or structure. "There was supposed to be three steps, and the third step they are given a microloan to actually finance their

business. And so there's that they don't know about…it hasn't been told to them that they can do that, and I don't think that the business classes haven't been approached in that way" (Heather).

One example that demonstrated barriers in communication surfaced during the interviews. In the interview with the Pathways director, she reflected on the challenge of getting the participants sign up for a bank account, which was one of program goals. "You know how difficult I have tried it? I have tried it like 10 times last year, trying to get them to sign up. And they just really refuse. I don't know what it is-- they refuse to sign up for a bank account" (Jessie). However, in the interview with the temporary Bhutanese staff person, "they (the directors) are trying to make them like doing a banking system. She asked some of the Nepalese people to open a bank account. And she said that lots of people don't want to, 'why don't they want to open a bank account?' she said. Because all of the benefits, because they are getting food stamps. They thought that if I open the bank account because they are not making a lot of money, they are making a little, maybe they will lose their benefits. That is why they didn't open the bank" (Shradha). This example indicated that among the directors' group, there was a lack of communication about issues with the participants' behavior.

In addition to the administrators of the Pathways program effectively communicating to the directors, the following remark made by the temporary Bhutanese staff person suggests that the artisans were not able to communicate effectively with program administrators either.

> If they hire one Nepalese people, like part time or full time, then she can work with (the artisans) you know. She or he, they can work with them and then we coordinate, it will go smoothly. I think of that. Yeah, that is very helpful because they can communicate with each other, you know, about the systems and about

> the program. It would make it successful…Yeah, more Nepalese people-- they could run the programs. And they should have one like translator or anything working with them so that they could understand…(the artisans) can talk to (the Nepalese staff person) whatever they like, whatever they feel. *They cannot talk to you whatever she thinks, whatever she like. She can talk to me whatever she like, whatever she think* (Shradha).

In these ways, program administrators were challenged with effectively communicating with one another and with the artisans.

Pathways Was Not as Effective as Anticipated

According to the Pathways' directors, in some ways, the program was not as effective in serving the refugee population as originally anticipated. "I think we really need to sit down and reevaluate what the program is and um what we can start expecting from them (the artisans), and what we change-- *because we know things that are not working*" (Heather). The program was initially available to any person with refugee status: "What we hope to do is enroll an individual who most likely doesn't have a job...we target a particular audience but we don't by any means turn anyone away, or who could benefit from it. We welcome them" (Jessie). Original participants were men and women from various countries like Burma and Eritrea, varying in age. However, after about a year, only middle-aged Bhutanese women remained active in the program despite the goal that "we really have to expand the program to involve more groups that just the Bhutanese community…other groups could really benefit from that as well" (Jessie). During the interviews, directors made observations about why Pathways might not be appropriate or attractive for some newcomers, including challenges with language.

One observation that might explain the loss of participants was related to the language, in that the program was unable to provide translators. "There needs to be a

native speaker that they feel comfortable with. I think that is really important. For instance, we had some ladies from Burma who had been in the camps in Thailand…then they petered because they thought that none of the good English speakers wanted to stay in the program…they didn't have the translators" (Heather). The Bhutanese group was assigned a paid translator from Bhutan, which likely contributed to their continuation in the program after others had left.

Another possible explanation for why more groups did not stay or initially become involved in Pathways was the possibility that Pathways did not or would not provide enough income for participants to take care of their responsibilities. "If you are under pressure to pay the next month's rent, do you have time to stay in the program, or do you have to go out and earn an income?" (Robert). One of the directors observed that the younger participants didn't stay in the program. "In some cases, the young people won't do it because they think it is a waste of time. They have said so. 'I'm not going to do this. It is a waste of time, I won't make enough money?' " (Heather).

In addition to not being able to earn enough income from the program, the directors suggest that Pathways program might not have been culturally appropriate or logistically possible for some people: "A lot of these cultures believe the women should be home, and the women believe that themselves too" (Heather). Additionally, even within the Bhutanese group, women were not always able to participate in the program because of responsibilities at home and the time involved in traveling to the program, "they (the women) can't ride. If they have car, they can reach in 5 minutes or 10 minutes, and then they can cook. But it takes like hour (by bus), or half an hour, or 2 hours to

reach at home, and then after that they may by tired, they have to cook, they have to make dinner" (Shradha).

Also, the program directors alluded to the possibility that the program might not be a good match for some newcomers based on their interests. For example, the skills—like the knitting, weaving and bead making—might not have been appropriate for some of the participants. "Originally, (the program director) believed that she was teaching them all some, a brand new skill. But especially with the knitting, it turned out that they mostly knew how to knit….I think in general we are not quite teaching them enough skills especially if they know knitting, and they come and they are just making something they know. We aren't teaching them skills" (Heather). Furthermore, the artisans might have been interested in the development of other skills. "A lot of them (the participants) wanted to do housecleaning. I think a lot of them could do catering." As such, it might have been better to provide training in those areas, "as opposed to kind of trying to teach them on how to make things that they might not really be interested in making" (Heather).

Additionally, the entrepreneurial emphasis of the program might have not been appropriate for the level of the artisans. According to one program director, "the business classes floundered…the curriculum was way over (the participants') heads. It was too theoretical. It was like global import, global export" as opposed to "if you are going to make a sweater and you have to buy the yarn for this much, how much are you going to have to make the sweater for?" (Heather). The directors remarked on the entrepreneurial emphasis of the program. "I think (the director's) expectations for everyone is that they would have this group of people come in and they would all progress through. Well they

are not all progressing through" (David). Another director also observed this pattern: "I'd say maybe 10% of the people who actually are in the program because they want to open their own business or have thought about it" (Heather). One director remarked, "Participants are not looking to start their own business in the near future, anytime soon--maybe 5 or 10 years they might want to. But they are happy making stuff and selling it. As long as they are happy doing that-- then just keep doing it" (Jessie). For these reasons, members within the refugee community might not have found Pathways to be appropriate for their goals. In response to the language barriers, time use, logistics and participants' interests and levels, program directors were "trying to revamp a little bit and trying to cater it better to the needs of the participants" (Sarah) so that it might better serve the refugee population.

Perceived Lack of Willingness and Ownership by the Participants

According to two of the respondents within the directors' group, there were artisans that were not interested or willing to take on additional challenges within the Pathways program. "It is pretty clear. There is a big chunk of them that do not want to move on, or do not want to take on additional challenges, and don't want to go through the entirely of the program" (David). Another director made a similar remark. "We emphasize it all the time: 'This is good for you, you should learn this.' 'No, this is ridiculous. Just let me knit.' No, they are not wanting to learn new skills, not skills like that, but entrepreneur training classes" (Jessie). However, not all the directors shared this perception. For example, in contrast was a remark made by one of the workshop teachers. "You can just see that they want to learn things, or do things. But they have not been given the opportunity" (Heather). In regards to the artisans being asked to go

out and sell their products, one respondent remarked that, "On the Farmers Market on Tuesdays that we had, I was busy and those ladies just sat there and hardly talked to anybody. Just really off putting when you are actually buying something—to have a salesman just staring at you" (Heather). Another respondent noted that, "Virginia is trying to get them out of the Farmer's Market on Tuesdays—getting them out to sew. They refuse to do it" (Jessie). So some of the directors perceived the artisan participants as being unwilling to take on new tasks.

Additionally, some administrators perceived that a lack of ownership by the participants had negative implications for the program.

> I think that the refugees have to take ownership on this program too. I think that is a very important factor into this-- that they have to believe in the program as much as we do. Sometimes, you know, there are times that we feel that they are not invested as we are, even though this program is really for them. And so that is a very important point, factor, too for the success of the program is that the refugees themselves take ownership (Jessie).

However, one instructor of the knitting classes acknowledged that the artisans might not be taking ownership due to the fact that they were not involved in some of the processes within Pathways.

> You know, they will probably have to learn—one thing that we don't do, because we supply them with all of their materials, they don't get an appreciation of how much they are or where to get their materials. Maybe that is a component we need to work in the future somehow (Heather).

Also, the director of Pathways remarked that it was not a quick or easy process to transfer ownership from the administrators to the participants.

> It is not anything that you can expect immediately with the population, this population. Slowly, it goes to the point that you know you are working towards that-- that they take ownership of the program-- like being able to go and sell the products without us expecting them to go out and sell the products, that they understand that this is part of what it is. That is part of what success is, is that you

> are able to talk to people about 'I weaved this basket and it is so beautiful and this is how much time I spent making it' (Jessie).

One of the directors considered ways to increase program ownership among artisans. "I think that getting (the participants) more engaged in the program is important, and we are beginning to do that a lot more than were…allowing them to have more say into the program and more confidence to that I think is important" (Jessie). Additionally, "another important factor is getting the community leaders to be involved in the program...the community rather than individuals. And I think that has helped us quite a bit in getting the people together and empowering them" (Jessie). Although there were efforts to increase a sense of ownership among the artisans, their perceived lack of ownership was a challenge for some of Pathways' directors.

Results According to the Artisan Participants

The following section covers the benefits and challenging components of the Pathways program as experienced by the artisan respondents. A summary of these themes can be seen in Table 3. After the transcribing and analyzing the interview transcriptions, we met as a group with the artisans to discuss the themes. The artisan respondents were enthusiastic about the findings, and only wanted me to make one modification: the artisans wanted to explicitly communicate how important the Pathways program was to them. The artisans appreciated the efforts that were being made to help them and "the other sisters like us." The women made remarks like, "This program can never end…this is all we have," "Without the Pathways program, we are blind," and urged the directors of the program, "Do not let the program end."

Benefits According to the Artisan Participants

During the interviews, the artisan respondents shared their positive experiences as participants in the Pathways program. As the majority of the artisans were not fluent in English, they appreciated having a program available to them that did not require English fluency. Additionally, artisan respondents appreciated the opportunity to earn an income and gain work experience. They enjoyed the positive impacts Pathways had on their mental health and well-being, and liked having the opportunity to acquire new skills and information. Finally, artisans remarked that the Pathways program allowed them to spend time with others in a social setting, which they enjoyed. These themes are discussed in more detail below.

Opportunity for Non-English Speakers

All artisan respondents expressed their personal challenges and goals in regards to learning English. One of the most important reasons respondents wanted to learn English was because without speaking English, they were not able to seek available jobs, complete applications or interview for a job, and thus, they struggled getting work. Also, without feeling confident in communicating with others in English, or navigating their new environments, the artisans seemed to feel helpless. "If we don't have to speak in English, then we are, I am like—what do you say? A person without speaking, they have no mouth" (Anugya). For these reasons, the artisan respondents were especially appreciative of the Pathways program because it allowed them the ability to participate and learn new things without having to speak English. "We can't speak any English. But we can still learn" (Anugya). Another woman stated that "I like to work there very much

because I don't have any English to speak to anybody so when I am working on that program, I don't have to speak very well" (Jagadambika).

Furthermore, the Pathways program gave participants the opportunity to hear and practice their English, which was valuable to the artisans. "I have an experience to speak in English from there. I can ask something for the teacher and I can make something for the teacher. By doing like that, I make different experience and can speak in English" (Devika). In these ways, the Pathways program offered non-English speakers an opportunity to be involved, and learn and practice English, which they perceived to be a success of the program.

Opportunity to Earn an Income and Gain Work Experience

For most of the respondents, the ability to earn an income and find work was viewed as a critical aspect of improving their lives and the lives of their children. One artisan expressed the point that if someone has a job, they "have a better life. If I got job, and if I earn money, then better life. We can do whatever we like if we have money" (Bika). Without employment or earning an income, one artisan expressed her anxiety trying to pay their many bills, which is a similar theme among artisans and newcomers in general.

> It is very difficult here you know Miriam. If we have no job, or if we have a job without insurance, so when we become sick, and the bills will come like 6,000 or 7,000 dollars….What can we do? The medical bill is very expensive here than others. It is very difficult. Here is difficult to spend…how do we pay for rent? How do we pay for our bill? And how do we pay for our loan? Everything is problem. But sometime, it is okay. It is nice. But if we don't have job, it is trouble, and crazy (Anugya).

Additionally, without work, respondents expressed their feelings of helplessness. "Many of the people, they are feeling like sad here, you know? They are not getting money from

any place. They have to go work, or they have to do interview for lots of lots of time. Only then will they earn money. They are going to an interview, but know nothing there" (Anugya).

For these reasons, the Pathways program was important for all artisan respondents because it allowed them to earn a small income. For example, one woman said, "I like very much because (Pathways) gives nice help for my family's support. I earn money" (Devika). Another woman also expressed her appreciation for Pathways. "It helps to make something so we can earn money…we do not have job. We have a difficulty to get the money" (Jaina). Additionally, Pathways offered a way for participants to gain work experience that would prepare them for potential future employment. Although most of the artisan respondents talked about their hope to find a job-- "I dream of just getting a nice job-- just this one" (Jaina)-- the artisans didn't view Pathways as being a long-term employment opportunity, but rather, as an opportunity for them to gain work experience. By participating in Pathways, participants hoped they would be more likely to find future employment. "I think that one thing is the experience to apply for another job. When we are asking to another job, we can put it on their resume, like 'I am working on the Pathways program" (Anugya). For the artisan participants, having the opportunity to earn an income and gain work experience were positive components to the Pathways program.

Opportunity to Improve Mental Health and Well-Being

For the artisan respondents, most only living in the United States a little over a year at the time of the interview, the process of moving to and resettling in a foreign

place was traumatic. Many suffered severe losses, of their properties, loved ones, livelihoods and positions of authority.

> People are leaving all their properties, and they are feeling so sad and they don't have anything. They are suffering. By making their own (hand-made products), people make happy. And they spend their time there. And they are living in the big house, and they have a comfortable life in their country, and they are thrown out of the house. They feel so crazy you know. My mom and dad had two big house, and they got thrown out, and we lived in a small house. And it was so difficult. We cry. And we were thinking about many things. If we are involved in that program, like Oxfam, or school, then people can forget about other things. And because of that, all the people can do something, and they can make something. They can give to a program. People are leaving lots of property in their country. They can't bring anything, just a small amount. They leave their land, they leave their market. They leave it in Bhutan. So they make-- their grand, grandfathers-- they make many things in their country, and they leave there. It is so sad no? Because of that, they need that type of program—to make happy for the people (Anugya).

Many of the artisans reported feeling anxious about how they will make it here in the United States without being able to communicate, get around or do something that helps them feel valuable. These circumstances had made some of the artisans feel helpless. "It is jail you know? There is nothing to do. We don't get a chance to go outside. And we don't have anything to do inside" (Bika). With nothing to occupy their time, women were idle which led to anxiety. "When there is thinking, there is stress. Sometimes I am thinking, oh how can I spend my life here? I feel so crazy. Sometimes is it okay, but sometimes no. Everything is in Nepal. And why are we coming here? I think sometimes it is crazy" (Anugya).

For these reasons, almost all the respondents appreciated the Pathways program, as it allowed them to spend their time constructively, take their mind off their traumatic pasts, and manage their anxiety. "I don't stay at home, is good. No tension. Free time is tension" (Devika). Another woman reflects on how Pathways helped her manage stress.

"To start to knitting, all the things are forgot…I will make that thing to release the tension…I have no money, how do they go, how to get money—always… And you start to make something really. I will make one thing today, and next day, continue. Release the tension. That is good" (Jaina). Another respondent echoes a similar sentiment. "This program is very good…it makes me busy. So I am not thinking, or in my free time, I do not have time to think about not having money, or not having a job, 'so what can I do?' There are many thinkings coming when we don't have anything to do. So I can knit. I can do something" (Devika). For these reasons, the artisan participants perceived that the Pathways program helped them improve their mental health and well-being. "This program is a good program. Free time, not inside. I'm happy. Very help me...Very help. No free time. It is good" (Devika).

Opportunity to Acquire New Skills and Information

Another positive aspect of the Pathways program that the artisans mentioned was that they were able to learn new skills and new knowledge from the Pathways' classes, and also from one another. Half of the respondents expressed that they liked that the Pathways program because it taught them new skills. For example, one woman stated, "Everything is good there to learn something. I make many thing like, I make like bag, scarves or hat. Before when I went there, I made many things, and I am learning more things there. And I likes it very much. And I am very happy about that" (Bika). Also, the artisans have the opportunity to gain new knowledge from each other, as well as from the program. "Pathways program helps for the Bhutanese ladies to learn new things, like different things. And they give like to learn new things, and share ideas from one person to another person. I am happy all the time by making group and learning something

different. A different idea. Different people have different ideas so we can express in group, and we can learn from one to another" (Devika). Additionally, the artisans were able to learn new things not just from other women from Bhutan, but also people from other countries. "We can learn new things. Different countries people, like African, Burmese and so the Burmese can make different things and African people can make different things. And we can share with each other" (Jagadambika). The respondents seemed to appreciate the opportunity to learn new skills, as well as share and acquire new knowledge from one another, which they viewed as a positive component of the Pathway program.

Opportunity to Socialize and Develop Friendships

The artisans also appreciated the Pathways program because it allowed for them to meet with others, socialize, and develop friendships. Half of the respondents remarked on how socializing with peers was a benefit of the program. For example, one woman expressed that "I like very much the Pathways program. When I go there to the Pathways program, I meets lots of friends there, and it makes me happy" (Panika). Meeting with others to socialize was a positive experience for the artisans, and allowed them to improve their well-being. "I am happy when I work with others" (Devika). Another respondent reflected that, "When I am meeting all Nepalese ladies there, they are talking together, and all together, they share with each other. I feel happy about that" (Pabritra). The artisan participants valued the opportunity to socialize with peers.

Challenges According to the Artisan Participants

The artisan respondents expressed discomfort in disclosing the difficult components of the Pathways program, as they did not want to seem unappreciative or critical. However, the artisans shared some of their negative experiences, such as the fact that they were not getting paid as expected, that they received less support from the program directors, that they were limited in some of the ways they could participate in the program, and that they were anxious that the program would end.

Not Getting Paid as Expected

Eight of the 10 artisans mentioned that they were not getting paid in a timely manner, or as much as they expected to be paid. "The thing that I don't like is that I don't get the money. When I am making something, I will not get the money in time. That is a sad thing for me" (Devika). This pattern resulted in difficulties for artisans because they could not rely on the directors of the program to follow through, and because not receiving money resulted in financial distress for the artisans, as they depended on the income to help with personal and family expenses. "It makes hard for us. They (the directors) are not paying at the right time. We make things, but we are not paying at the right time" (Harita). However, the respondents were sensitive to the fact that the directors were not getting paid either, which suggested their awareness of the program's larger financial issues. "Everybody will not get their money-- not just for me, but the persons who are working on that program. They are not getting money" (Aaduya).

Furthermore, artisans also expressed their awareness of some of Pathways' issues that prevented them from being paid as expected. One artisan made a remark about the

financial record keeping. "(The director) is doing whatever she likes, and somebody can get like 400 dollars, and somebody doesn't get any money. Somebody gets more. She is not making track before. Because of that, now she has trouble" (Anugya). Also, after the directors ran out of grant money to pay the artisans, the directors told the artisans they could only get paid if their products sold. Consequently, the artisans expressed the importance of selling their products. "The most important thing is to sell those stuffs. And if we sell those things, then (Pathways) will be run well" (Devika). In these ways, the artisans were understood why they were not getting paid as expected, although it did not change the fact that artisans were not able to fully rely on the Pathways program directors to follow through on their word, or depend on the income as a way to offset some of their personal expenses.

Receiving Less Support from Directors

The artisans expressed their concern that they were getting less and less support from the directors of the program, in terms of getting attention from the directors, receiving materials to make their products, and having a variety of classes available to them. One artisan mentioned that the director "has been working on other area and there is some work on the outside, so the true work she is visiting somewhere else" (Anugya). This observation suggests that the artisans were aware that they might not have been the most important priority to the directors. Also, artisans noticed that they were not receiving materials in which to make their hand-made products. "There is no yarn, nothing to give them. (The director) is coming without anything back. There are many people on there in the program and they have less amount of money to spend on them.

Maybe for that reason, they have to stop" (Chandra). Another observation made by one of the respondents is that there were fewer opportunities available for artisans.

> We are doing the knitting only. We are doing another weaving or sewing, but they will be able to do—but they can't do. Just they can do one thing, like knitting only….and that is another hard thing for me. If everything is available, than we can do a different kind (Harita).

The artisan respondents experienced difficulties with the Pathways program, as they perceived that they were not a priority of the directors, as well as receiving less supplies and opportunities than were initially available to them.

Limited in How They Could Participate in the Program

Most of the artisans mentioned their limitations in participating in the Pathways program. For example, in regards to the entrepreneurial training activities, most of the artisans felt that they were unable to utilize their new knowledge or participate in the selling of their products. "(The business training) is helpful for someone for those who can speak English, but it will not help for me because I cannot speak anything. And I don't know how to take the stuff and sell those things and some places. It will not help for me. Because I cannot speak English. So the business will not help for me" (Panika).

Some of the artisans alluded to the fact that they had ideas about how to improve the program, but were unable to share them with the directors due to various communication barriers. As such, one artisan suggested the following advice for the Pathways administrators:

> If the peoples, those people who can speak English and Nepali, and they can ask for their ideas, like we can do like this type of business…and we can make the program better…. Your type of people and their people can work together and explain something every day, or week. And they can explain and they can understand something. And later, after sometime, they can speak something and

> like that. What do you say, talk to each other? Communication yeah. It makes help and the program make to be nice if they do like that (Bika).

Without being able to communicate with the administrators of the Pathways program, the artisans felt limited in their ability to participate in improving the program. Similarly, the artisans felt limited in how much information they were receiving from the directors about Pathways, which also limited their ability to participate in program. "(The director) is not telling me like my program is not going well. She is not telling me anything. But I can understand right now is for her. And I don't know. Just, I can understand like, if you do like this, than the program will go on for good; if you don't do like that. Maybe she is trying a lot to make the program to run nicely. But something is trouble for her" (Anugya).

Also, artisan respondents expressed their limitation in taking ownership of Pathways without the help local community members to teach them about business in the United States. "We cannot run, the single people, the program. We must be needed many peoples and before somebody can learn about business in America, and how we can do business, and what are the systems to do everything. We have to mix together from other countries, and this country. And we mix together and make decisions like that. We have to do like this. Then it will be good" (Kalapi). From these remarks, it seemed like the artisans had desire of increasing their participation in the Pathways program, but felt there were some limitations in doing so.

<u>Anxiety that the Pathways Program Will End</u>

During the interviews, after discussing the difficulties within the program, and before closing the interview, almost every artisan respondent made a final statement

conveying their hope that Pathways program would not end. "I pray for all the stuffs and those who are working on the Pathways project. It is great. It helps our peoples and ourselves very well.…Do not stop this program. It helps the people—a lot" (Anugya). One artisan expressed her feeling of despair about the program ending. "Right now, everything is going down and nothing is there…that is another hard thing" (Harita). Another woman expressed her fear that she wouldn't be able to earn an income without the Pathways program. "If the program will be end, it is so hard because we didn't get a chance to do something anywhere. Just if the program goes continuously, it helps me to make something so I can make some money from there" (Aaduya). These remarks, like others made at the close of the interviews, suggest a certain level of anxiety that artisans feel in regards to the Pathways program ending. Although the artisans recognized that the program was facing various issues, they shared a strong hope that the issues would be resolved, and that Pathways would continue offering support to them. "The program will not going to be end. It will be going to be better later. So it will have some problems in the middle, but when we solve the problems, the program will be run well" (Devika). Because the artisans seemed deeply appreciative of the Pathways program, they expressed their anxiety at the possibility that the program might close.

DISCUSSION

In this section, I discuss the common themes between the directors' and artisans' groups, as well as my interpretations of these themes. I will then discuss the main assumptions that were made by the administrators of the program and the local and federal government. To conclude, I will make recommendations for service providers about how they might work more effectively with women with refugee status.

Synthesis of Themes

Through analyzing what was said in the interviews, I identified some overlapping themes that both the directors' group and the artisans' group discussed in the interviews, although discussed or experienced differently. First, both groups believed that the Pathways program had multiple social and economic benefits for those within the program. Both groups discussed problems within the infrastructure of the program, as well as issues with communication. Finally, there was overlapping between groups in regards to the artisans' goals and needs.

The most vocalized point that both the directors and artisans discussed in their interviews was that the Pathways program benefitted the participants of the program, despite the various challenges that the Pathways. Economically, both groups commented on the fact that many of the artisans were unable to find employment elsewhere, so the program greatly benefited participants who were able to earn an income through selling their hand-made products. Even if just a small income, both groups acknowledged the

importance of that money in allowing the artisans to better support their families and feel like contributing members of the community. On a social level, both groups talked about the benefit of acquiring life skills specific to living in Salt Lake, such as learning how to take public transportation, learning about the banking system, and learning language skills—which was particularly salient point made by the artisans.

There were also challenges that both groups discussed. The directors' and artisans' groups alluded to problems that resulted from weaknesses within the infrastructure of the program. The directors discussed how the program was "not working" due to a lack of resources, which might have partially been the reason for the lack of procedural, measurement or financial tracking systems and the fact that the directors felt like they were unable to spend time with the participants in the program. For the artisan respondents, they also alluded to problems within the program's infrastructure through their experiences in the program. For example, all artisans remarked on how they were not getting paid on time or as much as expected. They felt like they were getting less and less support from the directors, and felt like they were not always communicated with since the program directors were busy with other parts of the program. For these reasons, the artisans expressed their concern that the program was not doing well, which indicates their awareness of problems within the infrastructure and implementation of the Pathways program.

Also, both groups made points that indicated that there were some issues with communication within the program, and especially between the directors and the artisans. For example, while the directors talked about how artisans were unwilling to take on challenges or take ownership of the program, the artisans disclosed reasons that they felt

like they were limited in participating in the program, like they were unable to speak English or that they did not fully understand the systems in the United States. This misunderstanding demonstrates the fact that there were communication barriers. Also, as one of the respondents from the directors' group mentioned in her interview, the artisans were not always made aware of the structure of the program. Thus, the artisans were unable to demonstrate their desire to progress or take on challenges in the program without an understanding of what the program was or how they could progress. Another example that demonstrated barriers in communication was the example of the directors' goal of trying to open a bank account. The directors were unsure of why the artisans "refuse to sign up for a bank account" (Jessie). Without consulting the artisans, the directors remained unsure of the artisans' behavior, and might have even perceived their behaviors as evidence of their unwillingness to participate in the program. However, for the artisans, they simply did not want to open a bank account as they believed by doing so, they might threaten their governmental benefits. These are examples of how both groups maintained distinct perceptions about the program, however, due to communication barriers, these perceptions remained misunderstood, which resulted in various challenges faced by the Pathways program.

Finally, there was overlapping between both groups in regards to the artisans' goals and needs, although the groups perceived the goals and needs differently. According to the directors, the artisans were assumed to want to start and run their own small business. However, by asking the artisans about their goals throughout the interview process, they did not feel qualified or knowledgeable enough yet to become a successful entrepreneur in the United States. The goal of becoming an entrepreneur was

not at the level of many of the artisans, as most did not speak English, and had lived in the United States for an average of only 17 months. Alternatively, the artisans expressed their goals to learn English, earn incomes in order to support their children, and do something productive with their time so they might feel valuable to the community. This is an important difference of perception between the directors and the artisans, and will be discussed more fully in the following section.

Assumptions that Impacted Pathways

Based on my interpretations of the data, as well as my reading of literature on refugee resettlement and community development, I believe three general assumptions were made that negatively impacted the effectiveness of the Pathways program in serving women with refugee status.

First, the program administrators and major stakeholders assumed that the Pathways program was appropriate to the goals, needs, strengths and limitations of the participants. The decision of whether the program should have focused on entrepreneurial preparation trainings, income-generating activities, or life-skill classes was essential in how the program proceeded, however, the discussions around this major decision were made without consultation with or consideration of the potential participants. This conventional top-down approach is common among social organizations where the administrators assume that their programs will be effective without fully understanding or consulting the populations they are trying to serve (Lindgren & Lipson, 2004; Martin & Copeland, 1988). The result of this assumption was that the program goals were not appropriate for the participants, and thus many of the program's efforts did not produce results.

The second assumption that was made by the directors of the Pathways program was that the participating women of the program would not participate in the administrative decision-making processes, nor was their feedback necessary to the program. For various reasons, like the women might not have wanted to participate, or that it might have been too difficult to include the women in the decision-making processes, or that the women might not been qualified to participate, the women were not involved. By not allowing participants a formal opportunity to share in the decision-making, or even give feedback, the directors reinforced an assumption that the perceptions and experiences of the participants are not necessary or valuable to the program. This assumption perpetuates a cycle of disempowerment among women, as it maintains a hierarchical separation between the directors and the artisans in regards to who has power and who does not have power. For this reason, the program might have promoted the dependency of the participants of the program instead of allowing for them to take ownership of the program and truly develop their ability to be self-sufficient as individuals and as a group (Martin & Copeland, 1988). Also, the assumption that women do not participate in the decision-making processes results in poor communication and misunderstandings within the program, which negatively affects the effectiveness of the program (Martin & Copeland, 1988).

The final assumption that I identified was an assumption made by the federal and local government that host-communities, and specifically, the resettlement agencies and organizations, are capable of creating and executing effective programs for people with refugee status without receiving adequate funding or support. In the interviews, the directors seemed aware of the various infrastructural and communication issues that were

coming up. However, without the necessary support from the government, the program was only able to afford one full-time and two part-time staff persons, which was not adequate in running the day-to-day operations of the program, developing a strong infrastructure, or spending more quality time with the artisans in the program.

Recommendations for Service Providers

As both the directors' and artisans' group discussed, the Pathways program was important to the artisans, and within the community. Every participant in the study recognized the need and potential benefit of promoting the self-sufficiency of women with refugee status within the community. Even amongst the multiple challenges that were discussed in the interviews, the artisans pleaded that the program continue, which indicated the significance that the program had for these women. However, the execution of this program, and other similar programs, is critical and is greatly affected by assumptions of the program administrators, stakeholders and funders. As such, I conclude by making four recommendations to service providers in how to more effectively work with women with refugee status.

First, the program directors should set appropriate objectives for their program. To set these objectives, the directors must gain an understanding of the goals, strengths, needs and limitations of the participants of the program, which requires that the directors consult and maintain regular communication with the participants they are working with (Wallace, 1993). The participants are best aware of their own needs, cultural or logistical constraints, skill sets and strengths (Martin & Copeland, 1988). Therefore, it is critical for program directors to work directly with the participants in setting program objectives, and not to assume they know better, or are more qualified than the participants to make

such decisions. When directors and participants can set objectives together, with a shared understanding of how and why the objectives are appropriately matched to the strengths and needs of the participants, the program might produce better results (Wallace, 1993).

My second recommendation to service providers is to establish an effective program design and implementation of that design. For the design to be effective, service providers must include participants in the decision-making processes, and create mechanisms to obtain feedback from the participants (Rowe & Paterson, 2010; Wallace, 1993). Encouraging the women to participate in the decision-making processes will allow them to take responsibility, and even ownership of the program (Martin & Copeland, 1988). The programs that are able to achieve a sense of ownership and commitment among participants are more likely to be successful and long-lasting (Martin & Copeland, 1988). Furthermore, participants should be given opportunities to give feedback, ask questions about the services, and discuss their concerns. The importance of this reciprocal communication is that it can improve services, deepen relationships (Rowe & Paterson, 2010), and restore the self-respect and determination of the participants (Wallace, 1993).

Third, program directors should develop a strong infrastructure by starting small in their program and optimizing effectiveness before expanding to more diverse communities. Although not extensively addressed by the participants in the study, Pathways originally targeted a broad of a range of individuals from the refugee population, accepting applicants from many ethnic groups, and selecting individual applicants based on whether they seemed like a good fit for the program. Although this approach might work for more homogenous populations, it is not feasible for the refugee

population, as this particular population is extraordinarily diverse linguistically, culturally and in regards to their strengths and needs. Pathways lacked the resources to accommodate for the wide range of strengths and needs of the original program participants. Consequently, of those that originated in the program, only a group of middle-aged Bhutanese women remained active. This might be explained due to a few reasons: 1.) Pathways hired a part-time Bhutanese translator, which allowed the Bhutanese women to better understand the program and program directors, and thus actively participate in the program; 2.) many of the Bhutanese participants lived close to the workshop space, making it logistically viable for them to participate; and 3.) the program seemed to satisfy some of economic and social needs of the Bhutanese participants, perhaps more so than other groups of participants. For the administrators of Pathways, the narrowing of participants was a labor-intensive and tumultuous process for all involved, as the administrators needed to redefine the overall program goals and procedures. Also, the program depleted unnecessary resources, and might have potentially damaged its reputation in the community, due to the high attrition rates. For these reasons, I recommend that programs working within diverse population start with a small, more homogenous group. Once there is proven success and an effective model, the program can expand to other community groups. This approach allows for a degree of standardization within the program's procedures, which lowers costs within the program, as well as allows for the optimization of effectiveness, which is important an organization's reputation and attractiveness to potential funders.

My final recommendation for service providers is to ensure the sustainability of the program. To do so requires that participants in the program are able to take

ownership of the program so they might be empowered to lead the program independent of the directors' supervision. Another critical piece to sustainability requires that service providers and host-communities of people with refugee status advocate for additional governmental assistance and for polices that support refugee resettlement agencies and organizations. Advocacy is a critical component to long-term sustainability of programs.

Strengths and Limitations of Study

As with every research study there were some limitations. First, the findings of this study may not be generalizable to a wider population. Due to certain logistic barriers, we were not able to include less-active participants of the Pathways project in the study. Also, we were working with a very select group of middle-aged women from Bhutan, which does not represent all the many groups of women with refugee status living in host communities. However, although the results of the study might not be generalizable, the discussion of the results was based on more theoretical assumptions, which might be generalizable to a wider population. Additionally, there were cultural limitations that arose during the study. For example, it is not considered polite in the Bhutanese culture for women to outwardly criticize others. It was uncomfortable for them to discuss negative experiences they had with the program. Although in our methods, we made considerations to account for this, it remained a possibility that we did not get the entire scope of the participants' experiences and perceptions. Finally, we cannot assume that everyone in the study interpreted the interview questions in the same way. For example, the term "success" to one respondent might have meant something different to another respondents.

There were also some important strengths to the study. First, through the in-depth interviews, we gained a better understanding of the details of the directors' and artisans' experiences from their own point of view (Seidman, 2006). Also, my long-term involvement in the program allowed for the collection of richer data (Maxwell, 2005). Also, I was able to develop trust with the participants of the study, which allowed for them to feel more comfortable in sharing information with me that might have otherwise remained private (Miller, 2004). Additionally, by adopting the CBR approach, reciprocity was established between myself and the participants of the study. This allowed for the participants to develop a stronger sense of ownership of the study, and feel more confident and even enthusiastic in their ability to make positive changes even after the study was completed (Community Research Collaborative, 2007). Another strength of this study was that the results were useful to the community, as I was able to present the findings to the larger community and discuss with the stakeholders of the Pathways program ways of implementing the recommendations that were made in this study. Finally, the findings of this study might also be constructive for service providers in other host communities of people with refugee status.

Conclusion

Over my involvement with the Pathways program, collecting and analyzing data, and my research about refugee resettlement and community development, I find the Pathways to Self-Sufficiency program to be an excellent start to promoting the self-sufficiency of women with refugee status and it deserves to be pursued and supported by the community and government. However, there were definite challenges that became apparent in the Pathways program, and consequently, the program was not as effective in

serving the refugee population as anticipated by the administrators and stakeholders. The root of these challenges seemed to be the directors' underlying assumptions about the participants that ultimately perpetuated a cycle of dependency, as opposed to self-sufficiency among participants. Although the intentions of the directors were good, in order to become effective in supporting women with refugee status, we must challenge our deeply rooted assumptions about who should and should not have power and why. When we can modify these critical assumptions, we might have more success in promoting the self-sufficiency of women with refugee status.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW FORM FOR THE DIRECTORS' GROUP

- Personal Involvement:
  - What is your official title and role in Pathways?
  - Tell me about your understanding of what the Pathways program is and why it was created.
  - Tell me how you first became involved with Pathways?
  - What is your current involvement in the Pathways program?

- General perceptions of success and goals:
  - What does success mean to the Pathways program?
  - What are the Pathways' goals for the next 3 months?
  - What are the Pathways' goals for the next 5 years?
  - What are your expectations for the Pathways program?
  - Is Pathways producing the results that were intended?

- Success and challenges of the Pathways program:
  - What are the factors that would promote the success of the program?
    - Is there anything else that is needed for the program to be successful?
  - What challenges hinder the success of the Pathways program?
    - Is there anything else that jeopardizes the success of the program?

- Success and challenges of the participants:
  - What are the factors that promote the success of the participants in the program?
  - What are the challenges that the participants encounter in the program?

- Do you have any other insight to this study, or anything else that you would like to add that we have not covered?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW FORM FOR THE ARTISANS' GROUP

Introductory information to all Pathways' participants:

Thank you for spending some time with me today. I am a student up at the University of Utah. For my school, I am doing a big project. My goal with this project is to support the Bhutanese women because I very much respect and I want to help you succeed in Utah. The way I would like to help you is to find out what you hope for and need from a program in order for you to be successful. To get this information, I am asking many different Bhutanese women their ideas. When I have all your ideas down on paper, I will give the information to people in the community. I hope that the information will help people better understand you and what you need in order to be successful.

I know you have been involved with the Pathways program. I also know that many Bhutanese women were in programs in the Nepalese Refugee Camps too. There are things that have worked nicely about these programs, and things that haven't worked so nicely. I want to hear your ideas about these programs because it is helpful to know what can be changed in the future. The more that you can share about your experiences the more people can know how to support you.

It is very important to know that all your answers are helpful—all the good things, but especially, it is helpful to share all the hard things too. No matter what you say, you will still get paid for sitting with me. Also, your name will not be used. When I finish writing up all the information for the community, I will not use your name at all. It will be kept secret.

So right now, I am going to start recording us talking, so I can remember what you said better. When we are finished talking, I am going to write down your answers in a paper. Then I will write a big paper with everyones' answers. When I am finished with the big paper, I want to meet with you again so that you can tell me if my paper is good or if I need to change it. When we are finished, I will give the paper to people who want to understand you better.

Before I start to ask you questions about the program, I would like to get some information about you first.

Name: _____

Age: ____

Who lives with you in your house?
Name: _____ Relationship: _____
Name: _____ Relationship: _____
Name: _____ Relationship: _____
Name: _____ Relationship: _____
Name: _____ Relationship: _____
Name: _____ Relationship: _____

- How long have you been in the United States? _____
- How many years did you spend in the Nepalese refugee camp?
- How many years of schooling/education do you have? Could you tell me more about your school?
- What did you do for work before you came to the United States? Could you tell me more about how you spent your time?

Now, I would like to start asking you questions about your life in the United States because it helps me better understand you.

- I would like to know your experiences living in the United States. I know that it is very different here in Utah than it was living in Nepal. You have had many changes in your life. Could you tell me what is good about living in the United States?
    - What are other things that you like about being in the United States?
    - What else makes you happy about living in the United States?
- There are probably many hard things too about living in the United States too. Could you tell me what has been hard about living in the United States?
    - Is there anything that you wished was different in the United States?
- Sometimes we make plans or have goals for the future. Could you tell me what you hope in the next 3 months? For example, in three months, how do you want your life to be?
    - Are there any other important things for you to do in the next three months?
    - What do you need in order to accomplish these goals?
- I know it is a long time away, but what changes do you hope to have made in five years? How do you hope your life is in five years?
    - Are there any other important things for you do to in the next 5 years?
    - What do you need in order to accomplish these goals?

Thank you so much. That information is very helpful for me to understand you better. Now I would like to ask you questions about the programs you have participated in. There are no right or wrong answers. I just want to better understand your experiences. I want to know the good things and the bad things.

- I know many of Bhutanese women participated in programs in the Nepalese Refugee Camps. Did you also participate?
    - Can you tell me about the program?
    - What did you do?

    - How did the program work?
    - What did you like about the program?
    - What did you not like about the program?
- I know you have also been involved with the Pathways program. Could you tell me about that?
    - How does the program work?
    - Why was the Pathways program created?
- Can you tell me a little about the business classes?
    - What did you learn about?
    - Was the information helpful to you? Why or why not?
- Can you tell me about your experiences with the Pathways program?
- Do you still participate in the program? Why or why not?
    - What do/did you do with the Pathways program?
    - How long have you been participating with the program?
- There are many reasons that someone might go to the Pathways program. It is very helpful for me to know why you decided to go to Pathways. Could you explain to me your reasons to work with the Pathways program?
- What are your expectations, or what do you hope for from the program?
- There might be some good things about the program. Could you share with me what are the good things about Pathways?
    - Are there any other ways that the program helps you?
- Although there are good things about the program, there might be some hard things about Pathways. It is very important to know these things. When we understand the problems, we can start finding solutions to them. Is there anything that has been hard for you in the program?
    - Have you had any problems?
    - What isn't working about the program?

Thank you so much for sharing your experiences. This information is very helpful. Now for the last part, I would like to know about your ideas. You have had many experiences and have participated in many different programs. Because of your experiences, you know better than I what makes a program good, and how to make a program run smoothly. Could you share your ideas with me on how to make a program run better for you?

- What is needed in order to make a program run nicely?
- Who might be able to help you?

Thank you for those ideas! Now that you have answered all the questions, is there anything else you would like to share? Thank you so much for your answers, and telling me about your experiences. This information is so helpful.

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